

## THE KASHMIR SHAWL TRADE.

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**K**ASHMIR is not only one of the finest countries that the sun shines upon, but also a storehouse of exquisite works of art fostered by a people renowned for elegant taste and artistic faculty like the Japanese in the Far East. They, from primitive simplicity, began to aim at elegance, influenced, no doubt, by the natural beauties with which they were surrounded and by a climate eminently suited to their application to industrial pursuits, together with the wealth of raw materials with which nature has profusely endowed this country. Their works of art excite the admiration of the artistic world. Shut up within the high walls of the Himalayas and guarded by its snowy giants, they were contented to live in a little world of their own from which they neither attempted nor desired to extricate themselves, and, being hardy and industrious by nature, applied themselves to industries, supporting their families with the produce of their labour. They lived and worked from day to day and year after year with unchanging uniformity. Turbulent times there were many. Adventurer after adventurer came and turned Kashmir into one endless battle-ground for the satisfaction of their ambition and avarice, spreading horror over the country. But the Kashmiri suffered it with passive resignation and did not distract himself from the craft of his forefather; bequeathed to him with all the secrets and mysteries of the art.

• Kashmir was ever noted for, as the proverb says, *Shawl, Shali, Shalgam*, and the Kashmiri brought the shawl to the highest pitch of excellence.

It is a square or oblong article of dress worn in various ways hanging from the shoulders. It is characterised by the great elaboration and minute detail of its design and by the glowing harmony, brilliance, depth, softness, warmth and other

enduring qualities of its colours. These excellent qualities are the result of the raw material of the shawl manufacture which consists of the very fine, soft, short, flossy underwool called *Keli-phumb* or the *pashm* of Kel or shawl goat, a variety of *Capra-hircus* inhabiting the elevated regions of Tibet. These regions are, owing to their high altitude, intensely cold and Nature has clothed the goats with this warm wool. The higher the goats live, the finer and warmer is their wool. The Tibetans call the he-goat and the she-goat yielding the wool *Rabo* and *Rama* and the white and brown pashm, *Lena Karpo* and *Lena Nakpo* respectively and the Kel's pashm *tsokul*. There are several varieties of *pashm* according to the districts in which it is produced, but the finest comes from Changthong, the eastern district of Ladakh, and from Turfán. The *pashm* of Turfán is from goats in the Tian Shan mountains and the principal marts of collection are Turfán and Ush Turfán, and it comes by caravan by the Káshgar, Yárkand and Leh route. Those who trade in this commodity are called Tebet Baquáls. In 1817, the price was Rs. 15 per 6 seers or a *trak* when the import was 60,000 maunds. The *pashm* was imported by merchants who exchanged it for manufactured shawls and *pushmina* which they disposed of advantageously in Russia.

The shawl wool is sorted with patient care by hand and spun into fine thread by the Kashmiri women. The work is of much delicacy owing to the shortness of the fibre. The various colours are dyed in the yarn. The subsequent weaving or needle-work is a work of great labour, and a fine shawl will occupy the whole time labour of three men for not less than a year. There are two principal classes, one is *Kani* or loom-woven shawls, woven in small segments which are sewn together with such precision and neatness that the sewing is quite imperceptible; the other is *Amlíkar* in which over a ground of plain *pushmina* is worked by needle a minute and elaborate pattern. A peculiar method is employed by the weaver in converting his original design, which is prepared by a Naqásh, into a textile. Instead of working from a coloured drawing or diagram, the weaver has the pattern translated on paper into rows of symbols, each of which expresses the number of threads to be worked in, and their colour. The man who translates the pattern into written "key" is called *Khahan Wol*. The weaver has a tray at his

hand filled with bobbins of every required colour and with this written "key" or *talim*, as called by the Kashmiris, he sits on the loom, works in the stated number of threads of each colour as in the ciphered scrip with marvellous dexterity, knowing nothing of the pattern he is preparing, but gradually building up in a mechanical way the shawl on the warp before him. What a puzzle it would be to ordinary workers! Shawl is also manufactured at Meshed, Kirmán and Andijan in Persia and at Amritsar, Lahore and Ludhiana in the Punjab, but it is far deficient in quality as compared with that manufactured in Kashmir. Apart from the skill of the Kashmiri manufacturers, there is something peculiar in the atmosphere of Kashmir which renders the shawl soft.

The shawl formed a raiment of the votaries of fashion in Europe. Merchants made fortunes by trading in it and the industry once employed over 60,000 people and brought into the country 50 lakhs of rupees annually. Pushmina is the term used for all textile fabrics made from pushm-wool. It is woven plain or in various patterns of European tweed and serge. The earliest and indigenous pattern is in plain white or *Khudrang* (natural colour) or white and black stripes called *Resh Pombur*. The best white pushmina can now be had for Rs. 20 per yard.

When the Kashmiri took to this industry is not known, but it is certain that from ancient times Kashmir was famous for its shawls. The Mahábhárata says that when Krishna went to the Court of the Kurus as a delegate from the Pándavas, Dhratráshtira proposed to present him, among other things, 18,000 *avikani* or shawls, of the hilly country, obviously meaning Kashmir. We are also told that ere Tyne became a place for fishermen to dry their nets in, the Hindu-Phœnician commerce had an Asiatic renown; the spices of India were sought in the time of Solomon, and the gossamer muslin of Darca and the shawls of Kashmir adorned the proudest beauties at the Court of the Cæsars. In Judges V., 30, we read of diverse patterns of needlework, on both sides, and in Ezekiel mention is made of embroidered works brought by merchants in chests bound with cords and made of cedar, apparently referring to Kashmir shawls.

It is said that Mir Sayid Ali of Hamadán (Persia) *alias* Sháh Hamadán, who visited Kashmir for the second time in 1378 A.D. and stayed here for over two years, revived the shawl industry



which had long died out, and Sultán Qutb-ud-din, who was then the ruler of Kashmir, patronized, nourished and stimulated it. One hundred and sixty-two years later, a man of Khoqand in Central Asia, named Nagz Beg, who was a cook of Mirza Haider of Káshghar who came to Kashmir in 1540 A.D. and became the Vazier of Sultán Náruk Sháh, the then ruler of Kashmir, got a piece of pushmina, 1½ yards wide, prepared, and presented it to his master. Mirza Haider enquired as to what it was. The cook replied "Shawl." He called it by this name because the people of Khoqand call a blanket a shawl in their own tongue. A kind of blanket is even now manufactured in Central Asia which is called "Shawlki." Mirza Haider enquired, "Is it *yak* (single) shawl or *du* (double) shawl?" The cook replied, "Du shawl." It is said that since then this cloth came to be called by this name. Mirza Haider liked the shawl very much, gave a reward to the man and ordered him to prepare another piece. Mirza Haider, by the way, is said to have introduced the manufacture of paper in Kashmir and also the use of tea among the people. One day a workman who was weaving the pushmina was, for some negligence, given a slap on his face at which his nose bled and the pushmina got sprinkled with blood. Nagz Beg found that the pushmina looked prettier with the red spots and, intelligent as he was, he got pushmina thread dyed with red and green colours and wound on twigs and with them the cloth was woven so that red and green spots were alternately in regular rows produced on it. Nagz Beg was popularly called Naqd Beg and the tomb of this unique figure in the history of shawl industry is on the road at the Babribág near Zadibal, the northern suburb of Srinagar.

The art of *Amlikār* shawl was invented by a Kashmiri named Saida Bábbā alias Ala Bábbā in the time of Azád Khán, an Afghán Governor, who ruled in Kashmir from 1783 to 1785 A.D. Ala Bábbā was living at the Sokálipura mohalla in Srinagar. It is said he was led to his invention by observing a fowl walking on a white sheet of cloth which left prints of his dirty feet on it and suggested to him that if he covered these stains with coloured thread with the help of the needle the cloth would look prettier. He did so and finding his attempt successful, marvellously improved upon it. This remarkable man's tomb is at Rájwer Kadal. His lineal descendant now living is his great-grandson named Asad.

**Āla** who is residing at Nawa Kadal in Srinagar and pursuing his great-grandfather's calling, namely, darning.

Gradually, the improvement in the manufacture of shawl was developed with development in the refinement of taste, and *hashia* or borders were added to it. In 1864 A.D. in the time of Mahārāja Ranbir Singh, *Du Rukha* shawls or shawls with face on both sides were first made. The inventors were Mustafa-Pandit and Aziz Pandit. These ingenious men also invented the *Zamin past gul bālā* shawls or shawls with raised floral work. Mustafa Pandit's great grand-son is Khwāja Muhammad Makbul, now the Assistant Secretary of the Srinagar Municipality.

The *hashia* is the border and may be single, double or triple. The *palla* is the embroidery at the two ends. The *dhaur* or running ornament covers all the four sides. The *kunj* is the cluster of flowers or cone in the corners. The *mattun* is the decorated or plain part of the central ground. When the row of cones is double, it is called *dokunj*. A special design was used for shawls sent to Armenia, with which country a large trade existed. The design is credited to Khwaja Yusaf, an Armenian, who was in Kashmir in 1803.

The shawl designs are various, chiefly conventional and some realistic. The well-known cone pattern, with flowing curves and minute diaper of flowers, is elaborated in the most artistic manner and combined with floral decorations and a maze of scrolls. It has been called the Persian Cone or flame pattern. The cone, I think, is a purely Kashmiri idea. Some say the design was conceived from the windings of the Jhelum river and the scrolls were in imitation of the ripples of water caused by the back flow near the bridges on the Jhelum. It may, therefore, be called the "Jhelum pattern." The Jigha pattern was a favourite one with the Moghals, and it is said that many Andijini weavers were brought to Kashmir by the Moghals, and settled in Srinagar. Some believe that the cone is really an elaboration of an Egyptian Cocus of ancient origin.

The process of shawl manufacture is briefly as follows :—

(1) The wool is cleaned and treated with rice paste. Soap is never used.

(2) Spinning into yarn by the spinning wheel.

(3) Dyeing. In olden days 64 different tints could be given. Lac is used as a mordant.

(4) The yarn is then adjusted for the warp and for the weft. Both the warp and weft are double.

(5) Weaving. The warp is fixed in the loom. The coloured yarn is wound round small sticks which may be about 1,500 in number in richly embroidered shawls. The weaver has no idea what he has to produce, but only manipulates the sticks according to the *talim*.

(6) Washing in the water of the Dal lake, this water being peculiarly suited to render the pushmina soft and the colours fast and bright.

(7) Cleaning of discoloured hairs by *Purzagars*. The colour of white pushmina is confirmed by application of sulphur fumes.

The actual cost of a Rumal was as follows

	Rs
Asalkar (wages of shawl weavers)	300
Commission 25 per cent	75
Pushm, dyeing	75
Tax	75
Bukhsish Ustad (Master's wages)	75
Miscellaneous expenses designing, etc	25

Total cost was rupees 625. The shawl was sold in Paris for Rs 2,000, including insurance, freight, auctioneer's commission and other agency charges.

During the Moghul period, the art of shawl weaving attained to such excellence that a shawl,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  square yard in dimensions, could be produced which could pass twisted through a finger ring. The Moghals had a great liking for it. "His Majesty Akbar," Abul Fazal says in the *Ayuni Akbari*, "is very fond of shawls. By the solicitude of His Majesty the manufacture of shawls in Kashmir is in a very flourishing state." Bernier, who visited Kashmir in 1665 A D with Aurangzeb, says, "What may be considered peculiar to Kashmir, and the staple commodity which particularly promotes the trade of the country and fills it with wealth, is the prodigious quantity of shawls, which they manufacture, and which gives occupation even to the little children." In the year 1739, Nádír Sháh sent an Ambassador to Constantinople with fifteen elephant loads of presents to the Sultán, amongst which there were a number of Kashmir shawls which the Sultán presented to the wives of the ambassa-



dors in his Court. The Moghal Emperor, Muhammad Sháh, who ruled from 1720 to 1742 A.D., was presented with a shawl of a floral design which he liked very much and he ordered that Rs. 40,000 worth of shawls of the same design be manufactured and supplied to him annually. The design came to be called after the name of the Emperor, *Butá Muhammad Shahi*.

In 1752 A.D. Kashmir fell into the hands of the Afgháns and they too, like the Moghals, had a special liking for shawls. The demand gave a great impetus to the improvement of the industry. Jámawár, Dordar and Qasába or Rumál of diverse and beautiful designs were manufactured. The trade became extensive and there was great demand for shawls in Persia, Afghánistán and Turkistán and latterly in Russia.

In 1796 A.D. in the time of Abdullah Khán, an Afghan Governor of Kashmir, a blind man, named Sayid Yahaya, had come from Baghdád as a visitor to Kashmir, and when he took leave from Abdullah Khán to return, the latter gave him a present of an orange-coloured shawl. The Sayid having gone to Egypt gave it as a present to the Khediv there. Soon after, Napoleon Bonaparte came to Egypt with his famous fleet with the object of harassing the English in India, but it was smashed up by Nelson on the Nile. The Khediv gave him this shawl as a present. Napoleon sent it to France and it attracted the fashionable people there. French traders soon came to Kashmir and exported shawls of various designs to France.

Under the Sikh rule also, the trade was in a flourishing condition. Moorcroft, who visited Kashmir in 1822, says :—"The whole value of shawl-goods manufactured in Kashmir may be estimated at about thirty-five lakhs of rupees per annum." Diwán Kripá Rám was Governor in 1827 A.D. and then the trade was in a most prosperous condition, but a terrible famine visited the land in Col. Mián Singh's time in 1834 which gave a crushing blow to the manufacture.

When Mahárája Guláb Singh became the ruler in 1846 A.D., the shawl trade began to revive and commenced one of its most glorious epochs. The income to the State from 1846 to 1869 was, on an average, seven lakhs of rupees per annum. In Mahárája Ranbir Singh's time the export of shawls valued, on an average, 28 lakhs of rupees per annum. There was again great demand for shawls in France and other European countries.

The French Agents who came to Kashmir for the purchase of shawls were

Year.	Name	No of years on duty	Name of Firms Purchasing
1856-57	Petit	1	Chevieuise Aubertot
1856-57	Oujouanet	1	Frainy Gramaniac
1860-63	Lebréton	3	Do do
1863-70	Olve	7	Do. do.
1866-71	Lefebvre	5	Do do.
1865-68	Gosselin	3	Cie des Indes
1867-70	Brochard	3	Oshedé Blemont.
1865-82	Dauvergne	17	Cie des Indes

Messrs Uhlan & Co were the agents of the State in France who sold shawls for the State. Wallace Brothers of London and Moschede, Poute, Fissier & Co, of Paris were the agents of Khwaja Amu Ju Gangu, then one of the chief shawl traders of Kashmir. Latousse says— "In spite of heavy duty laid by the French Government, 110 Francs on a piece, whatever its value the trade flourished." Those were palmy days in this industry. All Kashmir and its wife were busy amassing handsome fortunes in the shawl trade. Night was joint labourer with the day in the busy pastime of making gold out of the industry, and the shawl merchants became so rich and luxurious as to put milk in place of water in their *hugās*. A shawl was then manufactured by Muzā Ali Kārkhāndāi which fetched as much as Rs 12 500.

Having thus touched the apex of its prosperity, the shawl trade now began to dwindle. The Franco-German war of 1870 and its disastrous consequences inflicted an almost mortal injury on it. The fashion of using shawls changed. The little flickering life in the trade that remained, was practically extinguished by the famine of 1878 and 1879. Mahārājā Rāmbh Singh nobly coped with the famine and advanced ten lakhs of rupees to the shawl manufacturers, but the shawl trade never recovered from the shock. A large number of shawl weavers left Kashmir and settled in Amritsar and Lahore where, up to this date, their descendants weave shawls. The art also lost all its charm, as imitative attempts to reproduce designs dictated by the West, which had no affinity with the real art, had been made, and the old artistic designs, the result of the earnest thinking of thousands



of minds spread over hundreds of years, had been given up. Sir George Birdwood says:—"The Kashmir trade in shawl has been ruined through the quickness with which the caste weavers have adopted 'the improved shawl patterns' which the French agents of the Paris import-houses have set before them."

The shawl trade was controlled by a Department called Dágshawl or Shawl Marking Department. The Dágshawl office was located in a large house at Saraf Kadal in Srinagar which still exists there. It originally belonged to a man named Majlis Rái who had come from the Punjab in 1685 A.D. and possessed property worth one crore of rupees which he lost in a plunder of the city in the time of Ibrahim Khán, a Governor of Kashmir appointed by Aurangzeb. The Dágshawl came into existence in this way. During the Afghán period saffron and grains, which the State got as its own share, were sold by the State at higher than the market rates to the inhabitants, of course against their wishes. The selling was called *niliv* or *tarah*. The loss that this system entailed on the people was ruinous. It told very severely on the shawl weavers who then numbered 12,000. In the time of the Afghán Governor, Háji Karim Dád (1776-83 A.D.), this practice was abolished and in lieu of it the shawl weavers were made to pay a small tax which was called *Qasur-i-sháli*. Subsequently, Háji Karim Dád, at the suggestion of his Peshkar, Pandit Dáyá Rám Quli, abolished the *Qasur-i-sháli*, but levied a tax on each piece of pashmina manufactured. The pashmina was caused to be brought before a State Official called Dárogah Dágshawl and its price was assessed by appraisers called Muqim or Wáfresh and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pie per rupee was recovered as duty. It is said that the income of the Dágshawl on the first day of its establishment was 1 anna  $4\frac{1}{2}$  pies only. Then in order to see that no smuggling might occur and that every piece manufactured did not go without payment of duty, guards, called *Shaqdars*, were appointed by the State. Small pieces, sometimes only a few inches in dimensions which had been woven by a shawl weaver, were cut away and taken to Dágshawl. When several such pieces were made, they were patched up into a piece of the required dimensions and it was stamped and made over to the Khurdies (the agents of shawl manufacturers) after recovering the duty from them. Nobody could sell a piece which did not bear the stamp of Dágshawl in token of payment of duty thereon. The

evasion of the payment made one liable to condign punishment. In 1806 A.D., in the time of the Afghán Governor, Sher Muhammad Khán Mukhtár-ud-daula, the duty was enhanced to 3 pies per rupee *ad valorem*. In the time of his son, Atá Muhammad Khán (1806-13 A.D.), there were 18,000 looms working, which increased to 24,000 when Sardar Azim Khán became the Governor of Kashmir in 1813. Azim Khán revived the old *Niliv* system and gave ten kharwars of shali per loom. The shawl produced on the loom was taken by the State and the price of shali, together with the amount of duty leviable on the shawl, was recovered from the price of the shawl. When Kashmir passed into the hands of the Sikhs, there had remained only six thousand looms and yet the duty was further raised to three annas per rupee *ad valorem*, and twelve kharwars of shali at three rupees per kharwar, of which the actual market price was only one rupee, were issued for each loom. The industry would have been extinguished had not a far-sighted man, named Jawáhir Mal, been then the Dárogah of the Dágshawl. He, in order to save the industry from being killed, increased the price of shawls by one quarter over the market rate. The result was that the owner of the shawl would accept four annas less per rupee from the Dárogah and sell the shawl to him. The latter would give him, after deducting the price of the shali advanced, a cheque for the balance on another shawl weaver who was a State debtor, to pay him from the amount of arrears outstanding against him. Thus all shawls were sold to the Dárogah and the traders purchased them from him. In this way the shawl weavers enjoyed some relief in spite of the enhancement of duty and the *Niliv*, and in a short time the number of looms increased to 16,000. In the time of the Sikh Governor, Diwán Kripá Rám, his priest, Misr Bhola Náth, was appointed as Dárogah of the Dágshawl and he levied a tax of Rs. 75 on each loom at which three weavers worked, and the forcible selling of grains to them; was continued. He thus realized twelve lakhs of rupees per year as income of the Dágshawl, but it meant sucking out all blood from the weavers. To the tyrannies of Bhola Náth were added the wrath of nature in the shape of flood and famine and the result was the number of looms shrank to 1,200. Colonel Mián Singh was now the Governor of Kashmir. He was a good statesman and he reintroduced the

old system of Jawàhir Mal with the result that, in the course of four years, the number of looms increased to 6,000. Bhola Nàth was succeeded by Ràm Dyál as Dárogah of the Dágshawl. It was represented to him by the Kárkhándárs that no sooner had a man learnt his work and probably some of employer's trade secrets than he rose in value in labour market and every effort was made by his master's rivals to secure his service. The practice of enticing away an operative was therefore made penal. The shawl weavers were thus in absolute charge of the Kárkhándárs or proprietors of factories. They became then slaves and were forced to work very hard. In the first year of his appointment Ràm Dyál fixed Rs 98 as tax per loom and besides gave per loom 20 kharwars of shál at two rupees per kharwar and five kharwars at the actual market rate which was Rs 1-4. In the second year Ràm Dyál added  $2\frac{1}{2}$  kharwars to the *Niliv*, making the total quantity of the *Niliv*  $27\frac{1}{2}$  kharwars, the price of which was Rs 52 and this, together with the duty, amounted to Rs 150 per loom. The weaver might or might not work, but he had to pay.

In the time of Sheikh Ghulám Mohidin (1841-46 A.D.) Dalpat was appointed as Dárogah and he further enhanced the duty by 19 rupees and continued the *Niliv* as in the time of Mián Singh. Each loom was to have  $2\frac{1}{2}$  men, that is, two adults and one boy and Rs. 170 were to be recovered per loom. In those days there were only five thousand looms and 22 shawl weavers are said to have cut off their thumbs in order to be disabled to pursue the profession of shawl weaving and thus be saved from the tyrannies of their Karkhándárs.

The tyrannies had at last an end. In 1846, Sheikh Imám Din came as the Sikh Governor and he set the shawl weavers free from the bondage of the Kárkhándárs and remitted two annas per kharwar in the rate of shál advanced as *Niliv*. He also made the Kárkhándárs give three rupees as reward to each weaver and increase their wages by one quarter and pay one-third of the *Niliv* themselves. This revived the industry.

During the reign of Mahárája Guláb Singh (1846-57 A.D.) there were 27,000 weavers working at 11,000 looms. Pandit Ráj Kák Dar was appointed as Dárogah and he was to recover and pay to the State twelve lakhs of chilki rupees. The weavers had to pay 49 chilkees each and they were again kept in charge of Kárkhándárs and none could go from one Kárkhándár to



another. The consequence was that the weavers were forced to work hard from morning to evening and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  *dumries* were paid to them as wages for weaving the thread wound on 1,000 twigs. A weaver could thus earn seven or eight *chilki* rupees per month, out of which he had to pay five *chilki*s as tax and had to live on only two or three *chilki*s. Some lazy and sickly weavers could earn only two or three rupees per month and could not pay the tax and thus became Government debtors.

In 1868 A.D., Mahārāja Ranbir Singh remitted the tax of 48 *chilki*s by 11 *chilki*s, and three years after remitted four annas from the *tarah* of 15 *kharwars* of shali which each weaver had to pay at 2-4-0 *chilki*s a *kharwar*, and ordered to receive *pashmina* in lieu of cash. For ten years this system continued, but as the demand for shawls in Europe declined, the State suffered much loss. The *Kárkhándáts* too became poor and in 1876 A.D. the Mahārāja reduced the tax from 27 *chilki*s to ten *chilki*s. Next year the tax was eleven *chilki*s per man and the *milw* was totally abolished. Owing to the famine of 1877 and the declining demand of shawls, the shawl weavers were reduced to poverty and the Mahārāja then abolished the tax altogether and in its place a permit duty of 20 *chilki*s and customs duty of eleven *chilki*s i.e., 31 *chilki*s per cent. on the value of the shawls sold or exported were recovered. This too was remitted in 1886 by His Highness the present Mahārāja when he ascended the *Gaddi*.

There remained customs and octroi duties on the shawl wool and shawls, which was Rs. 6-10-3 per cent. but these were also remitted by His Highness in 1901, A.D.

The account that I have given above shows that the shawl trade policy from the very beginning carried with it the germs of its decay. It overlooked the fundamental community of interest of both employer and employed in the success of their joint enterprise. By attempting to wrest all profits from the labourer, the employer over-reached himself and killed the industry. The shawl weaver was considered an inferior order of creation as the proverb would indicate :—

"*Sini muhima soṣal, rani muhima Khandvāo.*"

"If any kind of meat cannot be had, one can still get a mallow, and if a husband cannot be had, one can still get a shawl weaver."

The shawl weaver was ruled with a rod of iron and held in check with a relentless persistency against which he was powerless. He picked up a precarious livelihood. None cared to give support to him, hence the proverb—*Khandvav himayat* or support to a shawl weaver—a phrase synonymous with feeble and nominal support. How could the industry live under such an economically unsound condition ?

The art of shawl weaving is not happily dead yet, nor will it die so long as this State and the British Raj endure, even if there remains absolutely no market for this commodity. Under the treaty of 1846 with the British Government, the State sends a yearly tribute of one shawl and three Rumáls to the King-Emperor. The State gets these manufactured by contract for Rs. 8,000, but the quality is far from what it used to be.

The present position of shawl manufacturers may be compared to miserable jerry-built cottages rising over the ruins of a city of grand edifices of architectural beauty. The quality of pushm is not like what it used to be, the dyeing is imperfect, the old designs are abandoned and cheap showy goods have taken the place of real works of art, in the same manner as chrome prints have replaced master paintings in oil. Many shawl weavers have, as I have stated before, left Kashmir and settled elsewhere, others have taken to carpet-making or embroidery. Still the number of shawl weavers is large. The Census of 1911 registered five shawl and one *háshia* shawl factories in Srinagar.

The following articles are now produced :—

1. Plain pushmina.
2. Long shawl with border, palla and konj, Ekrukha and Durukha.
3. Jámawár, Ekrukha and Durukha of various patterns or designs.
4. Sárics.
5. Ladies' embroidered shawls—half shawls, with embroideries so arranged as to show itself on both the exposed surfaces when folded across the middle.
6. Capes, blouses, chogas and dress pieces, with needle work called Dávkár and Katunkár.

Ekrukha Jámawárs still find market in Persia, Afghánistán and Hyderábád. Durukha Jámawárs and long shawls are in demand in Bengál.

The use of imported European wool threatens the extinction of what remains of the shawl industry. Cheap German and Australian yarn is imported in large quantities and is used for various purposes for which pashm was formerly used. "Raffle" is made from this wool and sometimes sold as pashmina. The Raffle is rough and not durable and altogether a flimsy article, but, in the hands of the expert weavers of Kashmir, it is a clever imitation. Real pashmina will last a lifetime, but the life of the Raffle is not more than three or four years.

It is, of course, impossible for the shawl industry to regain its lost position. It is difficult to imagine that fashion will again turn in favour of the Kashmir shawl. It will never be again the necessary complement of a wedding trousseau in Europe. Fashion is great tyrant. But there are signs in the whole civilized world of an awakening of true artistic instinct and it is being acknowledged that the traditional handicraft work of the East represents the highest perfection of art. "It provides," as a recent writer says, "examples of absolute perfection for the inspiration of that general elevation of thought and feeling which all true students receive from the contemplation of master pieces of art and invention, without which it is impossible to excel in any human undertaking."

There is, therefore, every hope of this masterpiece of the weaver's art again receiving the appreciation it deserves. It may not reappear in the same form as before, but may reassert itself in another form more adapted to modern taste, which is distinctly changing into the artistic. In the history of the Kashmir shawl there have been many periods of ruin and revival, and the present, I think, is the time when an earnest effort is needed and, if done in the right manner, the creation of the Kashmiri weaver's loom may again become the most fashionable garment in Europe.

But shawl is not the be-all and end-all of the industries. The Kashmiri finds scope for his artistic faculties in many other directions. The industrial development of Srinagar has been very rapid in recent years, thanks to the peace and contentment enjoyed under the benign rule of His Highness the Maharaja. The present leading industries are wood-carving, silver and copper work, embroidery, papier-mache and carpets. They have attained to a degree of excellence and their qualities are fast improving. These works of art are in increasing demand all over the world.



and there is, therefore, a great and prosperous future before this country. The way to prosperity for a country is the systematic development of its resources and the organization of a trained industrial population. This cardinal principle has been recognised by His Highness the Mahārāja. He has established a Technical Institute, which is bound to prove an inestimable boon to this country. It will be a source of a general diffusion of opportunities for technical training and will afford facilities for the training of artisans and craftsmen. It will also guide them to correct the defects in, and give finish and touch to, the works of art. Finish and touch are at present lacking in the Kashmir works of art, and if they are learnt by the Kashmiri craftsmen and artisans, the economic future of Kashmir promises to be exceedingly bright.

*Srinagar.*

ANAND KOUL